Alfred University Temporary Telecommuting Program

I. Policy Statement

Alfred University is closely monitoring an outbreak of respiratory illness caused by COVID-19 which continues to expand worldwide. Infections of COVID-19 are being reported in a growing number of international locations, including the U.S. The U.S. reported the first confirmed instance of person-to-person spread with this virus on January 30, 2020. New York confirmed its first cases of person-to-person spread with this virus March 3, 2020 and is taking precautionary steps to contain the spread of this virus. As of this date, no known cases exist on our campus, but we are monitoring the situation daily.

Recommendations for the use of work at home and telecommuting arrangements are an important component of a multi-layered strategy to prevent sustained spread of COVID-19 on our campus and the Alfred Community. This program strikes a balance between ensuring that the institution can continue to function, while providing appropriate precautions for our students and employees to prevent the spread of illness.

This is a temporary program being made available to Alfred University employees due to public health concerns presented by COVID-19. The Administration will determine the operational feasibility and, if the work is necessary, telecommuting shall be assigned or approved consistent with this policy to the greatest extent possible.

The following policy applies to all Alfred University employees:

II. Definitions

Telecommuting: is an alternate work arrangement that allows employees to conduct all or some of their work away from the official work site. Telecommuting under this agreement may be up to five days per week.

Telecommuters: are employees who have been approved to participate in the Telecommuting Program.

Official Work Site: is the employee's assigned work location. This is the employee's usual and customary work address.

Alternate Work Site: is a location away from the University-provided work site where the employee is authorized to conduct business. This location must meet all criteria set forth in this document and be approved by the telecommuter's supervisor in consultation with the Alfred University Human Resources Director.

Set Schedule: is the schedule of required customary hours and days worked in a pay period.

Telecommuting Application: is an application form, available from Human Resources and completed by the employee and his/her supervisor/manager requesting to become an approved telecommuter.
**Telecommuting Work Plan:** is a document to be completed by the telecommuter, in whatever format specified by Human Resources, for each telecommuting day. The work plan provides important information about work activities undertaken during each telecommuting day including hours worked and work performed. Multiple telecommuting days may be included on a single work plan. The work plan must be signed by the telecommuter and the supervisor/manager and approved in advance by the Human Resources Director.

### III. **Enrollment**

**Telecommuting Application**

The following steps must be completed to request participation:

The employee must submit a Telecommuting Application to his/her supervisor/manager, unless Human Resources waives this requirement in writing. This requirement may be waived in an emergency.

The supervisor/manager will review the employee Telecommuting Application within 48-hours to make an initial determination whether an employee meets the necessary criteria.

The application will be sent to Human Resources for final approval. Human Resources and the area Vice President will endeavor to approve or reject the application within 48 hours of receipt. Any denial will be in writing.

**Employee Appeal Process**

1. If an employee's application is disapproved or if an employee wishes to contest assigned telecommuting, he/she may appeal to the Vice President, Business & Finance or the Vice President’s designee in writing within 24 hours of the denial.

2. The appeal shall state the reasons for disagreement with the Administration’s determination, and a decision on the appeal shall be rendered within seven (7) calendar days stating the reasons for the decision if denied.

3. Any denials of applications for telecommuting are not grievable under any Collective Bargaining Agreements.

### IV. **Guidelines for Participation**

The following are general guidelines for employees participating in the Telecommuting Program.

1. Employees must comply with all Alfred University, NYS and federal laws, regulations and rules required at their official work site when telecommuting. Failure to abide by all laws, regulations and rules may result in exclusion from participation in the Telecommuting Program and/or administrative action, including disciplinary action.

2. Employees must complete a telecommuting training program
before any telecommuting is permitted, unless otherwise approved in writing by Human Resources. This requirement may be waived in an emergency.

3. All assigned duties will be performed in a manner consistent with applicable agency and University rules, policies, practices, collective bargaining agreements, and ethical standards.

4. Telecommuting is not an employee entitlement. Full discretion to either approve or disapprove an application or work plan for telecommuting rests solely within the discretion of the University’s Administration, but applications will not be unreasonably denied. Employee performance in a prior telecommuting setting will be one factor considered for approval of telecommuting work plans. In some cases, employees approved for the Program may not have a particular work plan approved, in which case the manager can allow the employee to revise and resubmit the work plan or direct the employee to report to their official work site for the period covered by the at-issue work plan. An individual's participation in the Program can be suspended or cancelled at the University's sole discretion with 48 hours' advance written notice to the employee.

5. Telecommuting is not operationally feasible for all job functions. The University determines which job functions are eligible to participate in this program. Such a decision by the University is final and cannot be appealed.

6. Once a Telecommuting application has been approved, participation and start dates may be subject to equipment availability.

7. Official Work Site coverage may be among the considerations made by the administration when making telecommuting decisions.

8. Telecommuters will treat telecommuting days like regular workdays and will be expected to maintain a regular work routine while telecommuting.

9. Managers may require telecommuters to have a set schedule for telecommuting.

10. The approved set schedule is determined by administration in its sole discretion and will be specified in the approved work plan.

11. A telecommuter is required to report to their official work site upon administration's request at any time. A telecommuter may request to charge leave accruals in lieu of returning to the official work site. Such requests will be reviewed in accordance with all normal standards and any applicable laws governing use of leave accruals.

12. Telecommuters must be available via all required methods of communication throughout the workday. Should a telecommuter not be available through official channels, the campus will contact the
telecommuter via their personal contact information provided in the work plan.

13. Telecommuters may be required to forward their official work site phone to the phone that will be used while telecommuting.

14. In-Person meetings at the telecommuter's alternative work site are strictly prohibited. This restriction does not preclude a telecommuter from participating in phone or web-based meetings from their alternate work site.

15. Upon 24 hours’ written notice to the employee and union representative (if applicable), administration may access the alternate work site to review safety concerns, data security concerns or to inspect or retrieve University issued equipment.

16. All attendance rules and call-in procedures apply when telecommuting, however, the administration shall have the right to establish attendance and call-in procedures in the work plan sufficient to meet operating needs.

17. Employees must safeguard all passwords used in connection with University files or programs and ensure sensitive information is protected.

V. **Work Hours**

Telecommuters will work their approved workday (including overtime when appropriate and authorized). Hourly paid support staff and Professional Non-exempt Telecommuters will track their hours using the BANNER WEB system just as if they were physically working from their normal work area. Salaried employees will submit a weekly log of effort to their supervisors. All telecommuters must request time off in advance and submit all leave requests as currently required. All applicable laws, regulations, contract provisions and standard work rules shall be followed including the NYS requirement for a thirty-minute unpaid meal break for every six (6) hours worked.

When telecommuters are required by administration to report to the official work site on a scheduled telecommuting day, there is no expectation that the telecommuter will be granted a substitute telecommuting day in return. However, with flexibility as a key component of the program, at the discretion of the administration, a scheduled telecommuting day may be changed within the same pay period. If a telecommuter is required to report to their official work site, they will not be reimbursed for travel, nor may they be paid for travel unless otherwise legally required.

Unless otherwise directed, telecommuters will not be excused from work when a directed departure is issued through the Governor's Office of Employee Relations for the official work site. Conversely, if an emergency occurs at the alternate work site and the telecommuter is unable to work at the telecommuting site that day or if the
telecommuter is unable to, for any reason, continue working during their scheduled hours, the supervisor/manager may direct the telecommuter to come to the official work site or grant authority to charge accruals.

VI. **Equipment and Supplies**

The University will not provide telecommuters equipment to telecommute. The Agencies will not provide desks, chairs, file cabinets, or other office-related furniture or equipment. Employees may not use Alfred University funds, including the credit card, to purchase equipment or furniture for the purposes of telecommuting, nor will any such purchases made by telecommuting employees be reimbursed.

The use of an employee's personal computer may be dependent on the technology and network connections used by the campus. Administration will determine which connection mechanism is appropriate based on operational need.

Telecommuters using personal devices will receive instruction on how to access necessary programs. These must be tested before telecommuting can begin.

Minimal office supplies may be provided by administration and should be requested during the telecommuter's in-office work period. Supplies will not be shipped to the alternate work site. Any out-of-pocket expenses incurred for supplies, equipment, food, commuting, etc. will not be reimbursed.

The telecommuter must have an internet connection with bandwidth that is appropriate for conducting official business without disruption. The telecommuter is responsible to secure and pay for an internet connection. The University will not reimburse internet costs. The telecommuter is responsible for having a phone for all work-related calls. If an employee does not have internet access and/or a computer at the alternate work site, the employer will not assign telecommuting.

If assigned hardware, software or other work item is lost or stolen, the telecommuter must immediately notify his/her supervisor/manager and refer to the University's usage agreement for portable Media and End User Devices and complete all steps outlined within the policy/procedure.

When the Telecommuting program agreement ends, the employee must return any items provided by the employer on his/her next workday unless otherwise specified by administration.

VII. **University Policies/Security of Information**

University information possessed by the telecommuter cannot be shared with or made available to any other individuals.

Telecommuters must ensure that University records and information are secure and not maintained in a way that would make them available to any other individuals. Telecommuters are responsible for adhering to all campus policies, procedures and standards concerning use of computer equipment and the security of data/information while telecommuting. Each employee will be provided a copy of the pertinent IT policies prior to commencing telecommuting.
Unauthorized access to or disclosure of University information or systems must be immediately reported to the telecommuter's supervisor/manager. Such unauthorized access or disclosure, including the release of confidential information or the personally identifiable information of University staff or customers, which happened due to the telecommuter's neglect, will be addressed through administrative actions.

Telecommuters must protect and safeguard files, documents, equipment and other materials transported back and forth between the official work site and the alternate work site. Telecommuters shall protect University records and documents from unauthorized access, disclosure or damage and shall comply with all University policies and procedures regarding such matters.

Telecommuters must also take the following specific precautions:

a. Take confidential information offsite only when authorized by a supervisor.

b. Do not transmit confidential information from work e-mail to personal e-mail addresses or text messaging services (e.g. icloud.com, aol.com, yahoo.com or gmail.com).

c. Securely store all hard copy documents or office media so that others cannot view or access it.

d. Do not orally communicate confidential information where others can listen.

e. Place documents requiring destruction in Confidential/Sensitive destruction bins located at the official work site.

Telecommuters will be required to take appropriate action to protect the items from damage or theft.

* Loss or theft of University-supplied equipment must be reported immediately to the telecommuter's supervisor/manager.

* Any suspected data breach containing sensitive data must immediately be reported to the telecommuter's supervisor and the telecommuter must complete an Unusual Incident Report.

Under no circumstance may University data or information be transferred to or stored on any personal devices. Under no circumstance may the telecommuter allow University issued equipment to be used by any other person. Telecommuters must log off and secure any computer being utilized to conduct official business when not in use.